

EXHIBIT 5
DATE 1-15-09
HB 203

House Bill 203
January 15, 2009
Presented by Chris Smith
House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Chris Smith, Deputy Director of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

FWP understands and agrees with the intent behind HB 203. As introduced, the bill would create a number of requirements for FWP that would be administratively difficult to implement. We appreciate the sponsor's willingness to work with FWP to develop amendments to the original bill to meet his intent in practical ways.

The bill, as amended, would require FWP to post information on our website and, where practical, to notify citizens in the area, regarding the general location where we introduce or transplant wolves, bears or mountain lions. Of these three species, FWP only relocates bears at this time. It also requires FWP to let the public know, through the media, how to find the information on our website. These are reasonable steps FWP can and will take to ensure the public is informed about relocation of wildlife.

As introduced, the bill would have required FWP to notify a landowner if we transplanted deer, elk or antelope onto their property without prior written permission. FWP does not transplant deer, elk or antelope due to disease concerns and the fact that we have healthy populations of all these species where they are desired. Further, FWP would not enter onto, let alone transplant any wildlife onto, private property without prior permission. Given this, the bill is being amended to clarify that FWP must have prior permission to transplant wildlife to private land. FWP appreciates the sponsor's willingness to work with us to amend the bill and with these amendments would have no problems with HB 203.

Thank you.